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BLACK RIVER AUDUBON OPPOSES SELLING OF CROMWELL PARK FOR KART RACING

Elyria, OH- Black River Audubon Society, an environmental non-profit organization consisting of over 550 members throughout the Lorain County area, stands in opposition of the development of Cromwell Park for kart racing. As one of the City of Lorain's last remaining areas of significant green space, the project includes the transfer of 204 acres of valuable natural habitat along the Black River, with the option to transfer more.

Cromwell Park has been designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon, and the surrounding area is an important stop for migratory birds and is home to both great blue heron and double-crested cormorant rookeries. Over 115 bird species have been recorded at Cromwell Park, in addition to numerous mammals and other wildlife.

"The city's perspective is that the landfill is wasteland, but nature and wildlife have a way of not only cleaning up our mess, but also creating valuable habitats for their survival," said Rob Swindell, president of Black River Audubon.

Requested site plans have not yet been shared with our organization, but our concerns are severalfold:

- Has the impact on the heron rookery and double-crested rookeries and other nesting birds been considered?
- Are there any restrictions or provisions on how the property can be used to minimize environmental impact?
- What impact will the noise and possible pollution have on not only birds and other wildlife, but also area residents? How will bike paths and walking trails be affected?
- Has the area been thoroughly studied to ensure that no protected or endangered species will be affected, such as the Indiana bat?
- Were other locations within the city considered; the city has abundant areas of dilapidation.

"The park already has the remains of another failed project, in which trees were cut down, only to have the project seemingly fall through," said Swindell.

Black River Audubon Society supports responsible business development, but opposes this location based on principle and the commitment to its mission— to protect birds and other wildlife.

"The environment continues to be sacrificed at the expense of business interests. It would be nice if the city would contact organizations like ours to work together before destroying natural habitats." Swindell said.

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